

5
A
SERMON

Preached to the
SOCIETIES
FOR
REFORMATION
OF
MANNERS,

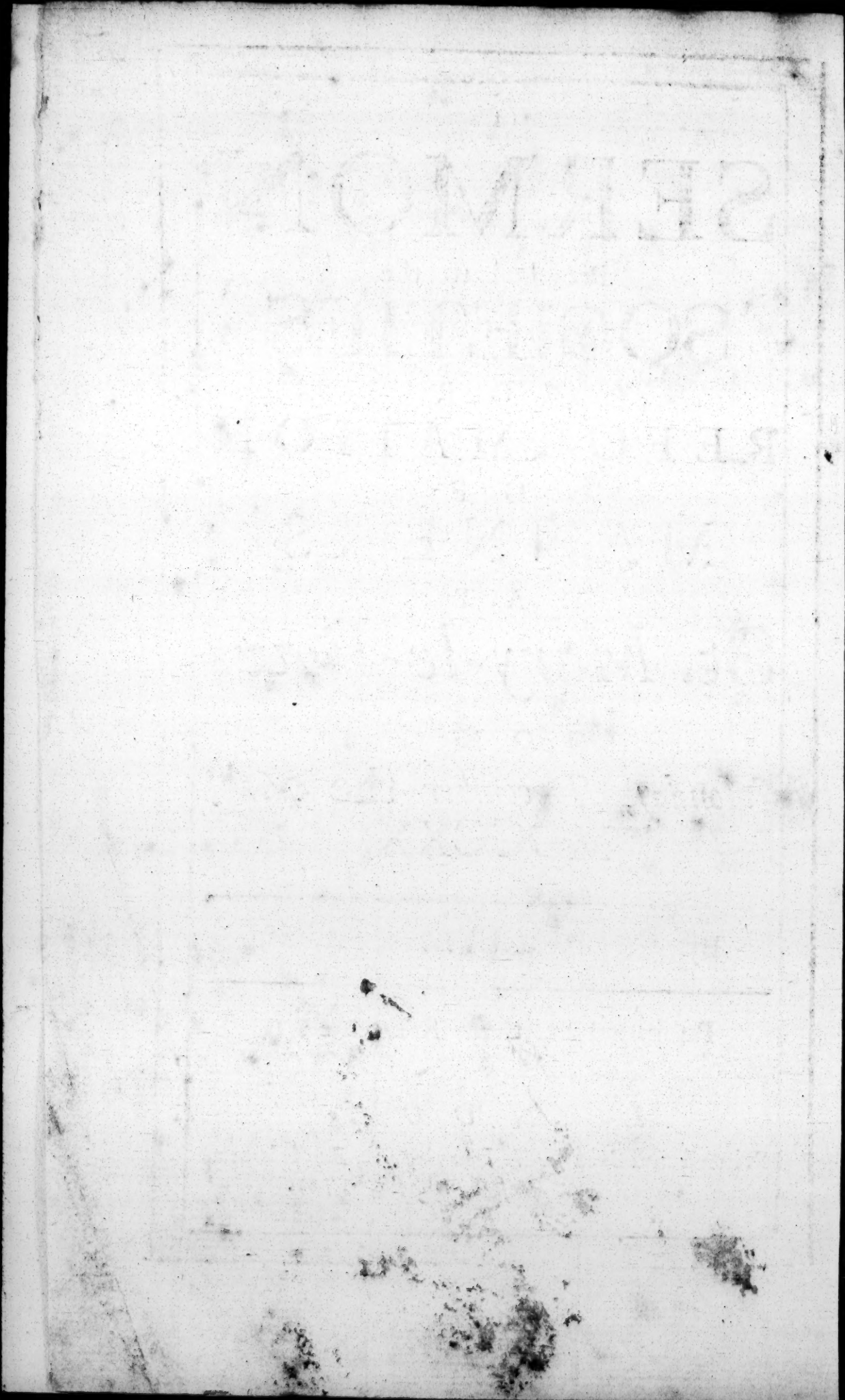
AT
St. Mary-le-Bow,
ON
Monday, December the 26th,
MDCCXX.

By JOHN HETLYN, A. M.

Published at their REQUEST.

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A
SERMON

Preached to the
SOCIETIES
FOR

Reformation of Manners, &c.

Isaiah LI. 7.

Hearken unto Me, ye that know Righteousness, the People in whose Heart is my Law: Fear ye not the Reproach of Men, neither be ye afraid of their Revilings.



EAR is the meanest of our Passions. We despise it in others, and endeavour to conceal it in our selves, as the Disgrace of our Nature, and most sensible Experiment of our Weakness.

A 2

To

TO Surmount this Passion, constitutes the *Hero*: and to *Direct* it right, the *Christian*. For it is no useless Affection, nor disgraceful otherwise than as misapply'd. There is an *Object* worthy our Fear, for *Whose* Sake only it was given, to *Whom* only it is a Due, and a suitable Homage. We *Ought* to fear God: and we Ought not (if we fear Him, we need not) fear any Thing else.

SO Exalted is his Supremacy, that to fear Him is a *Reasonable Service*; 'tis Honourable, 'tis glorious, 'tis the Beginning of Wisdom, and the Foundation of Virtue. Such Fear is no anxious, servile Dread, but a Filial, Generous Reverence, the true and Genuine Source of Fortitude and Magnanimity. *For in the Fear of the Lord is strong Confidence, and His Children shall have a Place of Refuge, Prov. xviii. 26.*

THIS then is the proper Office of Fear, for this End was it planted in our Natures, to be subservient to Devotion, and bend us low in a Reverential Awe before the Great Majesty of Heaven.

BUT before our Fear is thus Rectified, 'tis a Disease of the Soul, the Cause of many Inconveniencies, and a great Obstacle to Vir-
tue.

tue. Destitute of its proper Object, It becomes a shameful Meanness of Spirit; and instead of Devotion, produces Pusillanimity: instead of Fearing God, we Fear one another. Degenerate Cowards that we are, we fear, not only the Violence of Men, but their Laughter, the Laughter of Fools, their little Talk and impertinent Railery. And it is a righteous Judgment of God upon us, that when we cease to fear Him, we should be held in a slavish Awe and Subjection to Things so mean and contemptible.

IN such Fear of Men is founded the Tyranny of Fashion, and Custom, and Vulgar Opinion, which usurp upon our natural Rights: Yet must they be submitted to, as long as they relate only to Things indifferent. But when, as it often happens, they extend to Things of a Moral Nature, and require the Omission of a Duty, or Commission of a Sin, we must then renounce their Authority, and maintain our Integrity, with the Hazard of incurring Censure and Reproach.

THE Hazard indeed is a very Trivial one in the Eyes of Right Reason; but so formidable to the Generality of Mankind, that

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that they choose rather to Offend God than Men. Their Cowardice betrays them into vile and sinful Compliances, and they swim with the Stream, as foul as it runs.

To prevent this Mischief, Almighty God calls, as it were from Heaven, to animate the Courage of his Servants. *Hearken unto Me* (saith the Lord) *Ye that know Righteousness, the People in whose Heart is my Law: Fear ye not the Reproach of Men, neither be ye afraid of their Revilings. For the Moth shall eat them up like a Garment, and the Worm shall eat them like Wool: but my Righteousness shall be for ever, and my Salvation from Generation to Generation.* And to the same Purpose a little lower (*ver. 12, 13.*) he adds, *I, even I, am He, that comforteth you: who art Thou, that thou shouldst be afraid of a Man, that shall die, and of the Son of Man, which shall be as Grass? and forgettest the Lord thy Maker, that hath stretched forth the Heavens, and layeth the Foundations of the Earth?*

Thus does the Almighty vouchsafe to encourage us against the *Fear of Men*; a Temptation which attends all Kinds of Reformation, whether of our selves, or others. For when a Man would reform himself, the
World

World treats him as a *Revolver*: when he would reform others, as a declar'd *Enemy*, that openly Invades, and would seduce its Votaries. This will always happen, and those who hate to be reform'd, will hate the Reformers too.

YET both these Kinds of Reformations are indispensably necessary, each in their Order: for Reformation must begin at Home, and end Abroad. We must first amend our selves, and then we shall have Authority, and Capacity, and may reasonably hope for Success, in Reforming others.

THE pious Wisdom of these Societies has been careful, in the useful Tracts they publish, to inculcate the Necessity of this previous Qualification for the great Work they are engag'd in; well knowing, that all Pretensions to Publick Reformation without private Virtue are as Hypocritical and Presumptuous, as they are absurd and ridiculous.

THUS instructed by your Example, I shall not separate Two Things, which have so essential a Dependence on each other, *Self-amendment* I mean, and the *Reformation of others*; but treat briefly of Both with relation

relation to the Obstacles they meet with from the Censure and Reproach of Wicked Men. And,

First, In relation to Self-amendment. When a Man, enlightened by divine Grace, discovers the Error of his Ways; when he comes (as our Text expresses it) *to Know Righteousness, and have the Law of God in his Heart*: when, in Consequence of this, he often reflects upon the Wretchedness of his Condition, his Guilt, his Danger, with the Necessity of conforming to *that Law*; and accordingly takes some Steps towards it in serious Purposes and Resolutions: one of the first Temptations that assault him, is *The Fear of Men*, Fear of what the World will say of him. If, contrary to St. Paul's Example, (*Gal. i. 16.*) *He confers with Flesh and Blood* upon this Occasion, He will say within himself, “ If I should retrench such customary Expences, forsake the Company I have so long frequented, and renounce the Diversions I have been so much addicted to; “ What will Men say of me? How shall “ I be slighted and contemn'd ?

Many a hopeful Conversion have such Thoughts stifled: But let us be assur'd of this,

this, as a certain Truth, that as long as we stand in Awe of the Opinions of Men, we are not fit for the Kingdom of God. Not to Dare to Do our Duty is the basest, and most infamous Cowardice; and Almighty God will not be serv'd by Souls so mean and unworthy. So St. Paul assures us in the clearest Terms: *if I yet pleased Men, I should not be the Servant of Christ.* And Christ himself has declar'd, *that He will be asham'd of those before his Father and the holy Angels, who are here asham'd of him and his Gospel.*

It is strange that Men can be so deprav'd as to be *asham'd of Christ, asham'd of Truth, of Virtue, and of the Service of God; i. e.* of all that is Reasonable, and truly Honourable; of all that the Angels, the Arch-Angels, and all the Company of Heaven glory in. But see the abominable Perverseness of Sin, how it overthrows all Order, and infatuates Men to a Degree, that can hardly be accounted for. That Principle of *Shame*, which God appointed as a Preservative against Vice, as a Guard and Kind of Outwork for the Defence of Virtue; is turned against Virtue it self. Men,

blinded by habitual Sins, are ashamed of Virtue, and Glory in their Shame; I mean the only just Cause of Shame, their Vice and Debauchery.

THIS false detestable Shame is one of the Devil's strong-holds, by which he maintains his Empire in the Hearts of Men. They know Religion to be the better Part, and would gladly make it their Choice: but the Tyranny of Fashion, and Humane Regards, hold them fast, and they Dare not be Good at the Price of being Ridiculous.

AND yet, as bad as the World is, it is very Rare that the Ridicule turns directly upon Virtue her self: but is commonly aimed at some wilful and conceited Formalities, some Folly, or Weakness, or vain Pretention to Piety. In this Case it is easie to examine our selves whether the Imputation be true or false. If it be false, let us praise God for our Innocence, and by Perseverance confute the Calumny. But if we find any, though never so remote, Grounds for it, as sometimes will happen; for Malice is sharp-sighted, and may discover some Infirmities in us, which a fond Partiality to our selves
had

had overlook'd: in this Case we must take Advantage of the Censure as a seasonable Admonition, and remove all Occasion for such Reproaches in our future Conduct.

IT is certain that there *Are* many Pretenders to Religion, who give the World *just* Offence by their Behaviour. When Men, instead of correcting their Humours by Virtue, Pretend a Virtue in Indulging them: When they would make Idleness, or Spleen, Affected Singularities, Superstition, or Bigotry to their Party, pass for Piety, When they would be thought Religious, though they want common Honesty; and prosecute a mistaken Devotion, to the Neglect of the most indispensable Duties of Morality. When they make unnatural Mixtures of Humility and Pride, Fasting and Voluptuousness. When they are ridiculously Unequal in their Conduct, sometimes rigorously Austere, sometimes Vain and Dissolute: painfully scrupulous in Trifles, yet taking unwarrantable Liberties in Things of the greatest Consequence; straining at a Gnat, while they swallow a Camel; and Zealous to the Death for certain minute Obligations, while they neglect

Judgment and the Love of God, Or, lastly, when they make a Gain of their Godliness, an Art and Trade of their Religion. In these Cases, the Offenders must bear the Blame they have deserv'd, and not *take Refuge in the Sanctuary*, seeing it is not their Piety, but the *Want* of it, they are reproach'd with.

And it is Observable, that the Encouragement in the Text is given to those only, in *whose Heart is the Law of God*, and who consequently have an Experimental Knowledge of Righteousness. To such saith God: "*Fear ye not the Reproach of Men, neither be ye afraid of their Revilings* : Such have nothing to fear from the World. If Men find Fault with their Conversion, the Angels have rejoyc'd in it. If Men charge them with Folly, Christ hath declar'd them *the Children of Wisdom*. They may answer with St. Paul, (1 Cor. iv. 3.) *It is a small Thing that I should be Judged of you, or of Mens Judgment. He that Judgeth Me is the Lord*. It is with Pleasure they find their Conformity to their Saviour, his Predictions verified, and themselves entitled to inestimable

mable Blessings: for They are his true Disciples to whom he saith, (*John xv. 18, &c.*) *If the World hate you, ye know that it hated Me, before it hated you. If ye were of the World, the World would love his own: but because ye are not of the World, but I have chosen you out of the World, therefore the World hateth you. Remember the Word that I said unto you; the Servant is not greater than the Lord: If they have persecuted ME, they will also persecute you. And again: (Matt. v. 11, 12.) Blessed are ye when Men shall revile, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of Evil against you falsely for my Sake. Rejoyce, and be exceeding glad, for great is your Reward in Heaven; for so persecuted they the Prophets, which were before you.*

LET so much suffice to encourage us against the Fear of Men, with relation to Self-amendment. I proceed now to exhort you against it with Regard to Publick Reformation. For here we must expect that the Clamour will be much louder: but by this Time we are suppos'd somewhat inur'd to it. We have already experienc'd
the

the Rashness, the Unreasonableness, the Falshood of the Censure of the World, while we only dissented from it; and made no other Opposition to it, than by the silent Reproach of our Examples. We were then, as I said, only *Revolters* from its Party: but we now return in open Hostility to oppose and invade it, to prevent some from falling into its Snares, and rescue others from its Servitude. For this Glorious End, you, GENTLEMEN, have combin'd your Strength, and have (if I may so speak) lifted your selves into regular Troops, to beat down the strong Holds of Satan, and Fight the Cause of Religion under the Banners of Publick Justice.

IF ever any considerable Enterprize truly Religious could have long pass'd uncensur'd, One might imagine it should be That, which you are engag'd in. To remove Temptations and Opportunities of Sin; To render Vice difficult and Penal; To prevent the Infection of bad Examples, to which some Sins (such as Swearing in particular) are almost totally to be imputed; To hinder, I say, the Contagion of evil
Exam-

Examples by exemplary Punishments, which may perhaps sometimes have reclaim'd the Guilty, but were oftner seasonable Warnings to the yet Innocent: In a Word, To put the Laws in Execution, and take away That Reproach of our Nation, that we have the Best Laws the Worst executed of any Country in *Christendom*: and this too at your own great Expence and Trouble, and sometimes Danger; this is such an Undertaking, as, one would think, should have obtain'd a general Encouragement, Concurrence and Applause.

BUT Providence would not anticipate your future Reward by the Vain Praise of Men: It meant rather to Exercise and Improve your Virtue by Opposition, and Difficulty, and foul Misrepresentation; so that many among you might have taken up the Complaint of the Psalmist, (*Psal. lxxix. 4.*) *We are become a Reproach to our Neighbours, a Scorn and Derision to them that are round about us.* This has been the common Lot of good Men. The World and Religion have been Long at Variance, for (*Pro. xxix. 27.*) *as the Unjust Man is an Abomination*

mination to the Just: so He that is upright in the Way, is an Abomination to the Wicked.

YET whatever the World may say of your Societies, which are an Honourable Confederacy against Vice: You have the Satisfaction to reflect, That when you engag'd in them, you only renew'd the Engagement you had before made at your Baptism: You undertook no *New* Obligation: You united only for mutual Counsel and Assistance, that you might the better discharge *One* already Incumbent, even ever since your first Reception into the Church: When after being baptiz'd in the Name of the most holy Trinity, the Minister still retaining you in his Arms, pronounced your Admission in those memorable Words: " We Receive this Child
" into the Congregation of Christ's Flock,
" and do sign him with the Sign of the
" Cross, in Token that hereafter he shall
" not be ashamed to confess the Faith of
" Christ crucified, and manfully to fight
" under his Banner against Sin, the World,
" and the Devil: and to continue his faithful Soldier and Servant unto his Lives End.

THE

THE Wisdom of our National Church has retain'd this Holy and Significant Ceremony in her Baptismal Service: and the groundless Opposition which has been made to it, is, I think, a melancholy Instance of the Weakness of Men in running from one Extream to the other, and being sometimes more influenced by their Aversion to Error, than their Love of Truth.

I readily acknowledge, that the Sign of the Cross has been prophaned by Superstitious, and sometimes Idolatrous Abuses; the same Thing also has happened to the Sacramental Bread. Yet it is confess'd on all Hands, that an Abuse of things sacred requires only a Reformation, and not an Abolishment. But I have no Intention here to move a Controversie. I would only, as the Occasion requires I should, explain a pious and very significant Ceremonie, so as to mind those who have received it, of the Obligations it was meant to express, as they are declared by St. Augustin, Tract. 53. in Joan. *Ad hoc Dominus Crucem suam in eorum, qui in illum crederent, frontibus fixit; ubi est quodammodo sedes verecundie: ut de nomine ejus Fides non erubescat, & magis Dei*
C
Gloriam,

Gloriam, quam hominum diligit : i. e. “ To
“ this End our Lord would have his Cross
“ sign’d upon the Foreheads of Believers,
“ which are in some sort the Seat of Shame-
“ facedness, that their Faith should not be
“ ashamed of his Name, but prefer the
“ Glory of God to the Praise of Men.

You see therefore your Profession and Signature: how they engage you to encounter the frontless Impudence of Vice with a Christian Assurance and Fortitude. Be mindful of the holy Boldness wherewith the Lord had inspired the Prophet Ezekiel, when He said unto him, *Behold, I have made thy Face strong against their Faces, and thy Forehead strong against their Foreheads. As an Adamant harder than Flint have I made thy Forehead : Fear them not, neither be dismayed at their Looks, though they be a Rebellious House,* Ezekiel iii. 8, 9.

AND who are they, that we should fear them, these Patrons and Advocates of Vice? Are they not *Sons of Belial*, the Children of Disobedience, of Riot, and Violence? Are they not Men, who openly profess not to believe Religion, or (which is, if any can be, a greater Absurdity) who profess not
to

to practise, what they profess to believe? Are they not therefore Fools, gross Fools, whose very Commendations would be disgraceful, as their Reproaches are truly glorious? They now set insolently in the Seat of the Scornful, and with a prophane Gaiety deride your pious Enterprize: *But he that dwelleth in Heaven, shall laugh them to scorn: the Lord shall have them in Derision,* Psal. ii. 4.

IN the mean time, SIRS, you have the Approbation of good Men, and the Testimony of your own Consciences: You have Reason and Religion, and the Almighty God, for your Defence. Where all these concur with the Laws of the Land, as they do eminently in your Case; when the publick Voice of our National Justice requires of us, what our Reason and Religion command: as it leaves no ground of Objection to the Adversary; so, I think, it leaves no Excuse for us, if we should be slack or negligent in this great Work of Reformation.

IF the Laws of our Countrey had been (as those of many Countries have been) levelled against our holy Religion; yet we must not even then have feared to confess

it openly, although before the Tribunals of Pagan Tyrants ; although in the Presence of Racks, and Wheels, and Fires, under the immediate Apprehensions of Martyrdom. But since, by the Mercy of God, our Laws are constituted for the Support and Maintenance of Religion ; since the Sword of the Civil Magistracy is drawn and wielded in the Defence of Christianity : What shall we say of those, who sneak, and draw back, as afraid, or ashamed to attack Vice, while they stand secured, and encouraged by so visible a Protection ?

IN the Book of *Revelations*, (*Rev. xxi. 8.*) we find the *Fearful* join'd with the *Unbelievers*, and plac'd first in the black Catalogue of those, who shall have their Part in the Infernal Lake. And it is a dreadful Sentence which our Lord has pronounced in his Gospel, saying, that when He cometh in the Glory of his Father, with his holy Angels, He will be *ashamed of those, who have been ashamed of Him, and his Words, in this adulterous and sinful Generation.* It is indeed an *adulterous* and *sinful* World we live in, false to its God, and an utter Foe to Virtue. How else were it possible, that a Design of *Publick*
Refor-

Reformation; a Design so serviceable to the Government, so beneficial to Mankind, so disinterested and expensive, could have met the strange Discouragements you have experienced?

BUT, as I before observ'd, bad as Men are, they rarely have the barefaced Impudence to condemn *Virtue*, as *Virtue*. They must first obscure and blacken it with Falsehood and Calumnies; a Treatment you have long suffer'd under, and which has misled many well meaning Persons to censure your Enterprize, before they were sufficiently informed of its Nature.

LET me therefore represent the Disinterestedness of your Conduct to the Adversaries, for *Their own* Sakes, not *Yours*: for to be revil'd for Righteousness sake, is a Blessing too precious not to be valued by you. It gives such Opportunities of Patience and Humility, and persevering Fortitude, that you have great Reason, and our Lord has commanded you to rejoice in it. But, though Offences must be laid in your Way for the Exercise and Improvement of your Virtue in surmounting them; yet there is a Woe attends those by whom they come,
and

and we are bound in Charity to prevent, as much as in us lies, their Hurting their own Souls.

I therefore repeat that Challenge which you have so often published, and which has never yet been answered : Requiring that your Enemies (instead of general Clamours and Accusations of Extorting Money from Delinquents, and making a Trade of Reformation,) would produce any one Instance, during the Space of Five and Twenty Years, of any Member of these Societies taking or accepting any Money from Offenders. On the contrary, (to prevent, as much as possible, all Suspicion of a mercenary Design or Principle) you have not only recommended, but insisted on it with those of the Societies, who have given Informations against Vice and Prophaneness, that they should never receive that Part. of the Penalty, which the Law allows to the Informer. And if at any time hereafter it should happen, that any Persons concerned in your Societies should be chargeable with any of the evil Practices before mentioned, or even with taking the Reward which the Law allows, you desire of all, that are
heartily

heartily concerned for the Interest of Religion, that they would give you Notice of it.

I cannot think your Design needs any farther Apology. The Blame must Light upon the Laws, and those who make them, before it can reach you, who put them in Execution.

AND before I conclude, I would only remind you, that Reformation is a Branch of Charity, and that you must act in it, as with Courage, so with great Candor and Tendernefs, with a Heart melting with Pity, and discharging those Harsh Offices with such an Affectionate Concern, as that wherewith you would administer an Antidote to a Brother who had drank Poison, or as one Hand would serve the other in pulling out a Thorn, or Lancing a Tumour. This inward Tendernefs must be supported with a meek but manly Firmness, to Guard it from a vicious Lenity, and Condescension; and to give it that Natural Ascendant and Superiority which Authoriz'd Virtue must often assume, upon the Occasions in which you are engag'd.

Almighty and most Merciful God,
of whose only Gift it cometh,
that thy faithful People do unto Thee
true and laudable Service: Grant, we
beseech Thee, that we may so faith-
fully serve Thee in this Life, that we
fail not finally to attain thy Heavenly
Promises, through the Merits of Jesus
Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

F I N I S.



The Six and Twentieth
A C C O U N T
 O F T H E
 P R O G R E S S made in the
Cities of *London & Westminster,*
 And Places adjacent,
 By the *Societies* for Promoting
 a *Reformation of Manners;*
 By furthering the Execution of the LAWS
 against Prophaneness and Immorality,
 and other Christian Methods.

THE said SOCIETIES have, in Pursu-
 ance of their Design, from the *First of Dec-*
cember 1719, to the *First of December 1720,* Pro-
 secuted divers sorts of Offenders, *viz.*

For	{ Lewd and Disorderly Practices—	1189
	{ Keeping of Bawdy and Disorderly	} 14
	{ Houses —————	
	{ Exercising their Trades or ordinary	} 615
	{ Callings on the Lord's Day —	
	{ Prophane Swearing and Cursing	114
	{ Drunkenness —————	11
	{ Keeping Common Gaming Houses;}	} 16
	{ 4 whereof have been Convicted,}	
	{ and paid their Fines - ———	

The Total Number of Persons prosecuted,
 by the Societies, in and near *London* only,
 for Debauchery and Prophaneness, for 30
 Years last past, are calculated at Seventy
 Five Thousand Two Hundred and Seventy.

IF Impiety and Debauchery had gone on spreading and increasing among us for the last *Thirty Years*, at that prodigious rate as they did for many Years before, we had assuredly been one of the most profligate Nations in the Christian World; and that under the clearest Light and greatest Advantages for the knowing and practising our Duty, of almost any other Nation, which must probably have reduced us to a very miserable Condition long before now; but by the Blessing of GOD upon the various Endeavours of the Societies of several Sorts for promoting Religion, and Reformation of Manners, a wonderful Check hath been given to the Prevalency of the most scandalous Vices, and in many Instances, a visible Reformation has ensued.

THE Reasonableness of uniting in Societies, for the more effectual carrying on a Work of this Nature, need not be farther prov'd, after what has been said with so much Advantage upon that Subject in the *Annual Reformation Sermons*; as also by the Excellent Author of the *Whole Duty of Man*, who, in his Treatise of the *Causes of the Decay of Christian Piety*, hath this remarkable Passage: *The Scandal, saith he, brought upon Religion, as it was not contracted by the Irregularities of one or two Persons, but by associated and common Crimes; so neither will it be removed by a few single and*
private

private Reformations. There must be Combinations and publick Confederacies in Virtue, to ballance and counterpoise those of Vice, or she will never recover that Honour which she acquired by the general Piety of her Professors.

THANKS be to GOD, many such Combinations and publick Confederacies are now in Being, who make it a great Part of their Business to oppose associated as well as particular Offenders.

THE Societies for Reformation of Manners are eminently of that Number: And the Usefulness of such Confederacies is visible from what has been actually brought about by means of the said Societies, beyond what could have been hoped for from any private Endeavours. Multitudes, for 23 Years last past, have been prosecuted, and punished according to Law, for lewd and scandalous Practices. Great Numbers of Baudy-Houses, and other disorderly Houses, have been suppressed and shut up, and the Streets were very much purged from the wretched Tribe of *Night-walking Prostitutes*, and most detestable *Sodomites*. Many young Men, taken with lewd Women, have, by their being brought to timely Shame and Punishment, been discouraged and turned (as we have Reason to hope) from following such sinful Courses, which often cause them to defraud their Parents, Masters, &c. and bring themselves

to utter Ruine. Moreover, many Thousands of Books have been dispersed by these *Societies* throughout the Kingdom, and put into the Hands of lewd and profane Persons, to awaken them to a Sense of their Sins. By these various Methods, many Persons have, by the Blessing of GOD, been brought to a Sense of their Sin and Danger; and tho' they have at first been exasperated against the Instruments of awakening them out of their dreadful Lethargy, and stopping them in their sinful Courses; yet have afterwards blessed GOD for their Recovery, and been heartily thankful to those, who have been serviceable to them therein.

THIS Undertaking, begun by a very few Persons, has mightily spread it self, not only in *Great Britain*, but in Foreign Parts. And the great Good which, by GOD's Blessing, has been done by the said Societies, has very much animated their Endeavours. They have likewise been encouraged by several Royal Proclamations, Orders of Sessions, Presentments of Grand-Juries in many Counties in *England*; by the Lord-Mayors and Court of Aldermen of the City of *London*; by many Sermons of the Right Reverend the Bishops, and other eminent Divines, preached to the Societies, and published throughout the Kingdom; and by the Writings of other learned Men; as also by the solemn Approbation of a considerable
Number

Number of Lords Spiritual and Temporal, and the honourable Judges of *England* and *Ireland*, and the Commissioners of several Protestant Churches.

IT must be confessed, That Profaneness and Debauchery do still too much abound ; yet it cannot be deny'd, but that they are *reformed*, in their various Branches, to a very remarkable Degree ; from whence 'tis evident, that since this Work has had such considerable Success, notwithstanding the many and great Difficulties it has struggled with, much greater Advances might have been expected, had there been a more general and hearty Concurrence of Persons of all Orders amongst us, in Proportion to the Greatness of the Concern.

THOSE therefore that have a just Zeal for the Honour of GOD and Religion ; who desire to prevent the spreading of the Leprosie of Sin ; who are unwilling to have their Children, and other Relations, or their Friends and Servants, corrupted by ill Examples and wicked Allurements ; Those that sincerely wish well to those excellent and hopeful Nurseries of Piety and good Manners, the CHARITY-SCHOOLS ; and would be heartily grieved to see the Christian Instruction and pious Education that Children receive therein miscarry, through prevailing open Temptations to Wickedness,

ness, and a general Contempt of Religion: Those, lastly, who have any due Love to their Country, and would prevent a National Guilt, and thereby keep off National Judgments, and particularly the *Devouring Plague*, that continues to rage in our neighbouring Countrey, which we have just Reason to fear will reach us for our Impenitence, and continued Opposition to the Methods of Reformation, cannot possibly, one would think, but heartily approve and assist this Useful Design for Suppressing Prophaneness and Immorality.

Now, Whereas some have most maliciously insinuated, That it is not *Reformation* which is intended, but the getting of Money from the Delinquents; and by such base and vile Reports have imposed on some very well-meaning People: It is hereby declared to the World, That such a Charge upon these Societies is absolutely false. It is allowed, that there have been some base and wicked Persons, (not engag'd, or in the least concerned in the Societies for Reformation of Manners) who have extorted Money from Offenders, and sometimes from honest Men. But all such Practices are utterly detested by these Societies, (who, it is well known, have strictly enquired after such

such Persons, and when discover'd, have brought them to Punishment) nor do they know or believe, that any engaged in these Societies are chargeable therewith. And to prevent, as much as is possible, all Suspicion of a mercenary Design or Principle in any that act in the Business of *Reformation*, the GENTLEMEN concern'd have all along recommended it, and indeed insisted upon it with those of the Societies, who have given Informations against *Vice* or *Prophaneness*, that they should never receive that Part of the Penalty which the Law allows the Informer; and it has not come to their Knowledge, in upwards of *Twenty Years* time, that any one Person of those Societies have acted otherwise. However, if at any time hereafter it should happen, that any Person or Persons concerned in any of the Societies for promoting *Reformation of Manners* should be chargeable with any of the evil Practices before-mentioned, or even with taking the Reward which the Law allows them; it is humbly requested of all that are heartily concerned for the Interest of Religion, that they will give them Notice thereof.

AND

ness, and a general Contempt of Religion: Those, lastly, who have any due Love to their Country, and would prevent a National Guilt, and thereby keep off National Judgments, and particularly the *Devouring Plague*, that continues to rage in our neighbouring Countrey, which we have just Reason to fear will reach us for our Impenitence, and continued Opposition to the Methods of Reformation, cannot possibly, one would think, but heartily approve and assist this Useful Design for Suppressing Prophaneness and Immorality.

Now, Whereas some have most maliciously insinuated, That it is not *Reformation* which is intended, but the getting of Money from the Delinquents; and by such base and vile Reports have imposed on some very well-meaning People: It is hereby declared to the World, That such a Charge upon these Societies is absolutely false. It is allowed, that there have been some base and wicked Persons, (not engag'd, or in the least concerned in the Societies for Reformation of Manners) who have extorted Money from Offenders, and sometimes from honest Men. But all such Practices are utterly detested by these Societies, (who, it is well known, have strictly enquired after such

such Persons, and when discover'd, have brought them to Punishment) nor do they know or believe, that any engaged in these Societies are chargeable therewith. And to prevent, as much as is possible, all Suspicion of a mercenary Design or Principle in any that act in the Business of *Reformation*, the GENTLEMEN concern'd have all along recommended it, and indeed insisted upon it with those of the Societies, who have given Informations against *Vice* or *Prophaneness*, that they should never receive that Part of the Penalty which the Law allows the Informer; and it has not come to their Knowledge, in upwards of *Twenty Years* time, that any one Person of those Societies have acted otherwise. However, if at any time hereafter it should happen, that any Person or Persons concerned in any of the Societies for promoting *Reformation of Manners* should be chargeable with any of the evil Practices before-mentioned, or even with taking the Reward which the Law allows them; it is humbly requested of all that are heartily concerned for the Interest of Religion, that they will give them Notice thereof.

AND

AND for the further Preventing any Objections from those who are too much disposed to raise them, against this necessary Work of Reformation; that there is more Regard had to the Punishment, than to the Conversion of prophane and vicious Persons; it may not be improper to acquaint the World; That in Conjunction with the other pious and proper Methods, of Instruction, Admonition, and Reproof, which are used by the Societies, to awaken Men to a Sense of their Sins, and Concern for their Souls, the Number of large Books, and lesser Discourses, that have been wrote by some of the Members of the Societies for Reformation, or which they have procured to be wrote and published by others, and have given away at their own Charge, in this and other Kingdoms, for the Furthering of the Reformation of this, and other Nations, and the particular Conversion of such Offenders as they have brought to Punishment for their crying Enormities, are calculated at above Four Hundred Thousand.

The Number of Books given }
away by the Societies ——— } 400,000

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